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TITLE:

The Integration of Women into Combat Arms Units

SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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Executive Summary

Title: The Integration of Women into Combat Arms Units

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Thesis: This paper provides an overview of the history of women in combat, current policy and issues that prevent women from serving in combat units, evidence that supports gender integration, and lessons learned from the integration of women into male dominated career fields.

Discussion: There are a myriad of factors that shape the argument as to whether the United States military should continue to prevent women from serving in combat arms units or change policy to allow gender integration of all units. This study seeks to examine the validity of these arguments and look at other male dominated career fields to see if valuable lessons learned can be applied to the integration of women into combat units. Historical analysis and examination of current policy in foreign militaries show instances in which small numbers of women serve successfully in combat units. This analysis then leads one to consider the question of whether this small percentage of women that have been successful justifies a change in policy and law. Opponents of gender integration cite numerous reasons to continue the exclusion of women from direct combat occupations, the greatest of which is the risk of reducing mission readiness through the disruption of unit cohesion.

Conclusion: In a liberal democracy, legislative and policy change is often foreshadowed by a public dialogue. Over the past several years the United States has engaged in such a discussion over the right of homosexuals to serve openly in the military. The people voiced their overwhelming support for a change in the Don't Ask Don't Tell policy. Likewise, the majority of the United States population favors the integration of women into combat units and combat military occupational specialties (MOS). Ultimately, it is the author's view that it is merely a matter of time before gender integration of combat units occurs. The pressing challenge for the military going forward will be to determine the most effective means by which to execute this change in policy. Ultimately, the most important factor in this integration is to ensure that standards are not lowered in order to allow women to serve in previously closed MOSs.

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Preface

Throughout my time in the Marine Corps the integration of women into combat units has been a topic of discussion. I chose this topic because I feel it is important to gain further insight into both sides of the argument through a variety of sources to include: surveys, interviews, research studies, books, newspaper articles, online articles, and blogs. In 2012 and 2013 this subject has been a serious topic of debate. Manpower policy changes have been made that integrate women in combat support MOSs into combat units previously closed to female Marines.

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The United States military has undergone vast changes in personnel demographics and integration in its history. An example in history is full integration of African American males into all segments of the United States military and most recently demonstrated by the recent repeal of the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy, allowing homosexuals to serve openly in the military. American society constantly examines what it considers to be fair and just, adjusting laws and policies along the way. An issue that has received a great deal of recent attention is the question of whether or not women should be allowed to serve in combat units and direct combat military occupational specialties. There has been a great deal published over the last several decades on both sides of this issue. This paper does not intend to argue for or against gender integration into combat arms units but instead provides an overview of the history of women in combat, current policy, issues that prevent and support women from serving in combat units, and lessons learned from the integration of women into male dominated career fields.

This topic has relevance on a multitude of levels. As a leader in equality and human rights, the United States of America is proud of leading the way and being a role model to other countries. With the recent policy change announced to begin the integration of women into combat arms specialties and units it is the responsibility of the Department of Defense to ensure the transition goes as smoothly as possible. Lastly, men and women should be judged by their capabilities rather than by the societal expectations for their gender. It is due to all these reasons that this topic is significant to America, the Department of Defense, and for men and women throughout the nation.

METHODOLOGY

Many sources were available to the author in researching this topic. Books, magazines, and newspaper articles were heavily relied upon. Additionally, government documents such as

MARADMINs, a study report from the Center for Naval Analysis, and Congressional Reports made up a significant portion of the research material. Finally, less formal sources such as material drawn from blog posts and interviews aided the author in the gathering of information. The author relied most heavily on scholarly works and recent studies and findings in order to present a contemporary and objective overview of this very complex subject.

HISTORY OF WOMEN IN COMBAT

Martin Van Creveld in the book, Men, Women and War, argues that the idea of warfare being a male undertaking is not new. From the time of antiquity, the common characteristics of female warriors were that they did not display the more feminine traits of women. In other words, women had to give up their femininity to be warriors. Furthermore, Van Creveld provides a counter-argument to many of the claims of women in combat throughout history. Van Creveld does not dispute the fact that women have been in combat but believes that more is made of their participation and significance than historical records justify. Beginning with the classical Mediterranean societies and progressing through to modern times he tries to provide some balance to the argument. For instance, he suggests that the existence of ancient tombs containing some female remains proving the historical accuracy of a female dominated Amazon society is akin to a future anthropologist finding a 20th century grave of an Israeli woman in uniform jumping to the conclusion that the Israeli Defense Force was an all-female organization.¹ His book addresses the historical case of Joan of Arc in detail as an example. He argues that she was an individual who showed skill in military planning and leadership but not in actual combat. At her own trial she testified that she had never personally killed anyone. Van

Crevelde concludes that Joan of Arc's particular effectiveness was the emotional effect caused by having a female leader more than her actual military prowess in direct combat.²

While Mr. Van Crevelde is a respected historian, his argument regarding the history of women as only marginal in combat has not been broadly substantiated. Women have been fighting and dying in combat for thousands of years.³ There are many historical examples of women serving as warriors. In 1997, female remains were found buried with swords, daggers, arrowheads, and saddles in southern Russia. It is claimed that these burial mounds contain the earliest known female warriors dating back to the 5th to 4th centuries BC.⁴ "About 20% of Scythian-Sarmatian 'warrior graves' on the lower Don and lower Volga contained females dressed for battle in the same manner as the Greek tales about the Amazons."⁵ Additional evidence surfaced nine years ago in the city of Tabriz where 2000 year old remains of an Iranian female warrior were found.

A Chinese woman who is thought to have led many military campaigns as a general during the Shang Dynasty was Fu Hao, wife to King Wu Ding. Also in China, Princess Pingyang raised and commanded her own army in support of her father in his revolt against the Sui Dynasty. Yet another historical example of a female warrior is Nusaybah bint Ka'ab who fought to defend Islam and the Prophet Muhammad in the Battles of Uhud, Hunain, and Yamama.⁶

The Dahomey people, located in present day Republic of Benin, Africa, established an all-female military unit that provides an example of a large and well-organized female force. The Dahomey demonstrate that female warriors can "be physically and emotionally capable of participating in war on a large-scale, long-term, and well-organized basis. Far from being weakened by the participation of women, the army of Dahomey was clearly strengthened.

Women soldiers helped make Dahomey the preeminent regional military power that it became in the nineteenth century.”⁷

Nineteenth Century American women also participated in warfare. It has been documented that during the early years of the United States, when physicals were not required to join the military, women dressed as men in order to join the military. Consequently, a woman's gender was often not discovered until she was killed or wounded in battle. These women joined the military for the same reasons as men; to serve their country, make a steady wage, and to serve an honorable cause. It is said over 400 women disguised themselves as men and served during the American Civil War as active participants in combat units. This number does not take into account the many women who aided the units of both sides by caring for their wounded and assuming other support functions.

It wasn't until World War I that women were officially allowed to join the military. As many as 33,000 women served in support roles in World War I and over 400,000 in World War II. Many of these women served as nurses or in administrative billets. Women demonstrated they could do more than fill domestic functions. They made significant contributions to the nation by providing support to the warfighter and providing a large portion of the labor force that produced war materiel for the Allies.

As a result of a shortage of qualified men in World War II, women's roles expanded to include: mechanics, drivers, pilots, administrators, nurses, etc.⁸ It was the first time in history women served in the Army other than as nurses. They served in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) and were vital to the success of the war. Additionally, over a thousand women served in the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) during World War II, freeing male pilots

to fly more combat missions. These WASPs were vital to the war effort ferrying replacement aircraft to combat units.

During the Vietnam War an estimated 11,000 women, the majority volunteers, were stationed and served in Vietnam. Most of these women served as nurses but they also filled other billets such as doctors, air traffic controllers, and intelligence officers.⁹ In addition to those women deployed, thousands of other women supported the war effort in all of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Women have proudly served in Iraq and Afghanistan for over a decade beginning in November 2001 when the first United States conventional forces deployed.¹⁰ These women have predominately served in combat service support roles. In 2013, women represent over 14% of the military.¹¹ That said, over 100 women have paid the ultimate sacrifice with more than 600 wounded in action.¹² This demonstrates that the character of modern asymmetric warfare exposes military personnel in support roles to the dangers of combat.

The character of the last two wars in which the United States has been involved has blurred the line between frontlines and rear areas. “In 2010, Admiral Mike Mullen, then chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said ‘I know what the law says and I know what it requires, but I’d be hard pressed to say that any women who serve in Afghanistan today or who’s served in Iraq over the last few years did so without facing the same risks as their male counterparts’.”¹³ Women are fighting and dying alongside their combat arms comrades.

Furthermore, the definition of ground combat must be examined. “Direct ground combat is engaging an enemy on the ground with individual or crew served weapons, while being exposed to hostile fire and to high probability of direct physical contact with the hostile force’s personnel. Direct ground combat takes place well forward on the battlefield while locating and

closing with the enemy to defeat them by fire, maneuver, or shock effect.”¹⁴ The forward edge of the battlefield is no longer defined, recent wars have erased this line. Now even women in combat support roles are in forward deployed battle space getting shot at and returning fire.

DISCUSSION POINTS

I. NATIONAL DUTY

CITIZENSHIP

“What does it mean to be a full first class citizen of this nation with all rights, privileges, and obligations that pertain to that status?”¹⁵ One argument is that citizens of this nation who benefit from all the entitlements “should have equal obligation to protect that society, and all persons in a democracy should participate in that protection according to their ability rather than their membership in a particular group.”¹⁶ Lorry Fenner argues in the 2001 book, Women in Combat, Civic Duty or Military Liability, that the next step is to have women register for the draft. That registering for the draft is a “civic responsibility” and helps move our nation towards equality.¹⁷

One’s worth has often been determined by one’s ability to serve their country. An example of this belief was demonstrated between the American Civil War and World War II. “Participation in combat-dying for one’s country has historically enabled minorities to claim the full privileges of equal participation in society, something basic to our form of government. That is why African-Americans for generations ‘fought for the right to fight’ and why combat and military service are so important to women and homosexuals. The opportunity to earn citizenship through service in the armed forces also motivates many immigrants to enlist. Combat and service promote equal protection of the laws and undermine prejudice and

discrimination.”¹⁸ Granting women the opportunity, if qualified, to serve in combat units arguably will lead the U.S. towards greater equality. During times of war, all citizens should serve unless medically unqualified. National service can take multiple forms and individual strengths could be considered during assignments.¹⁹

PUBLIC OPINION

The consensus of public opinion has often been the bow-wave of change. The repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell was made easier by the results of surveys conducted within the military that showed the majority of young people within its ranks did not care if homosexuals served openly. The time for integrating women into combat jobs due to public consensus may have arrived. “A 2011 survey conducted by ABC News and The Washington Post found that 73 percent of Americans support allowing women in combat.”²⁰ A recently released poll from Fox News published in February 2013 shows that a majority of American voters support lifting the ban on women in combat.²¹

The tides are changing: the Roper Survey submitted as a part of a report to the President in 1992 presented the fact that 43 percent of the American public would accept the assignment of women in infantry. Despite the minority vote for infantry integration, 58% polled were in favor of putting women into the artillery and armor specialties and 59% for women being assigned to Special Forces.²²

With the increased public support over the past twenty years for women to serve in combat, it appears to be merely a matter of time before integration occurs and it is the responsibility of the Department of Defense and senior military leadership to make the integration as seamless as possible.

SOCIETAL VALUES

The United States is viewed as a leader by many in the world. The U.S. holds itself to a higher standard and is an example of a successful democratic nation that treats its citizens with dignity and respect; in short, the United States is a nation that values equality and human rights. In the area of equality for women in the military, the United States could be portrayed as lagging. Many nations allow women to serve in combat units and direct combat occupational specialties. The list of such nations includes: Israel, France, Germany, New Zealand, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Spain, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Austria, and Ireland.²³ Opening the doors for women to serve in combat demonstrates to other nations that the United States treats every person with respect and equality. (Further examination of the integration of women into combat arms by other countries will be discussed later in this paper.)

The issue of the legality of combat exclusion in the U.S. is a current topic of debate at the national level. There is a lawsuit being heard that argues that the exclusion is unconstitutional and prevents women from reaching their full potential in the military.²⁴ The Gender Equality in Combat Act has been proposed with the desired end state of terminating the ground combat exclusion policy.²⁵ This Act would allow women the ability to reach the highest positions in the military which favor those who have served in combat and are in a combat occupational specialty. This anticipated effect assumes that among the small population of women physically capable and desiring to serve in a combat MOS some would have the skills and talents required to reach the highest levels of military leadership.

Richard Kohn, Chairman, Curriculum in Peace, War, and Defense and Professor of History, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, drives home the importance of having a military that reflects the societal values it defends despite the associated challenges by stating:

It is natural to resist because change poses a diversion from the primary purposes of preparing for and deterring war, and engaging in combat. That is why as outstanding a public servant as General George C. Marshall during World War II opposed racial integration, believing it divisive and concerned that the Army could not afford to act as a "social laboratory" during a national emergency. But civilian control means that our military will be organized and will operate according to the nation's needs and desires. Historically our national security and our social, legal, and constitutional practices have had to be balanced. The services know that military efficiency and combat effectiveness do not always determine our military policies, and less so in times of peace and lessened threat.²⁶

Even though continuing to exclude women from combat arms units may increase military efficiency that does not mean that doing so is the right course of action. As Richard Kohn says we must balance our social, legal, and constitutional practice with military efficiency and effectiveness. Given that the United States is a society committed to equality regardless of sex, race, creed, or orientation for the military to truly represent the society it defends it must embrace gender integration throughout the entire force not just combat support and combat service support units.

II. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CONCERNS

UNIT COHESION

One of the most difficult matters to arise every time this issue is debated is the disruption women will have on unit cohesion in combat units thus resulting in lower unit readiness. When this issue was reviewed and provided as a report to the President in 1992 the "evidence clearly shows that units cohesion can be negatively affected by the introduction of any element that detracts from the need for such key ingredients at mutual confidence, commonality of experience, and equitable treatment."²⁷ Further research has identified the following areas that could cause cohesion problems: women being unable to shoulder the physical requirements

demanding of a combat arms member, sharing of intimate spaces, men feeling they must protect women, pregnancy, and dysfunctional relationships (e.g. sexual misconduct).²⁸

Bob Scales, a man who has studied the “Band of Brothers” effect for decades, recently wrote an article for The Washington Post in which he pleads with the public to ensure unit cohesion will not be degraded by integrating women into combat units and to be “sure women will fit in before we take the plunge.” Scales describes the Band of Brothers effect as the “essential glue in military culture that causes a young man to sacrifice his life willingly so that U.S. infantry units fight equally well.”²⁹ His fear, like that of many others, is that the integration of women into combat units would irreparably compromise unit cohesion. This is a matter that cannot be taken lightly.

Maintaining unit cohesion, which many consider the key to military success, will become much more difficult with the integration of women into combat units. The traditional methods of male bonding may cease due to incompatibility with a woman’s presence.³⁰ All this being said, Richard Kohn, the author of Women in Combat, Homosexuals in Uniform: The Challenge of Military Leadership rationalizes that “military leaders will have to redouble their effort to define appropriate conduct and to punish or expel those in the ranks who cannot or will not control their language and their behavior”. He believes behavior is the fundamental issue and the U.S. military does an excellent job regulating the behavior of its members.³¹ Furthermore, a report conducted in 1993 by the General Accounting Office discovered “members of gender-integrated units developed brother-sister bonds rather than sexual ones. Experience has shown that actual integration diminishes prejudice and fosters group cohesiveness more effectively than any other factor.”³²

Cohesion has been a justification on other occasions to prevent the integration of certain demographics into the military. African Americans and homosexuals were prevented from serving in the military for this reason. What was found a year after the repeal of DADT through a study published by the Palm Center was that “the change had no overall negative impact on military readiness or its components dimensions, including cohesion, recruitment, assaults, harassment or morale. The research found that overall DADT repeal has enhanced the military’s ability to pursue its mission. Previous claims about the negative impact that gay service members might have on troop cohesion mirror those currently used to support the female combat exclusion.”³³ “In the long run, the service should find that their effectiveness, as in the experience of racial and gender integration, will be enhanced rather than diminished. The strength of our military depends ultimately upon its bonds to the people; the armed forces will be stronger the more they reflect the values and ideals of the society they serve.”³⁴

But is this a valid statement considering we live in a society in which less than one percent of the population is in uniform at any given time and the majority of our elected civilian leadership did not serve? One may argue that a profession must serve the society from which it is drawn but not necessarily form a mirror image of it.

The most damning counter-argument to concerns over unit cohesion comes from the U.S. government itself. Surprisingly, research conducted in 1995 by the U.S. Army Research Institute for Behavior and Social Science “found that the relation between cohesiveness and performance is due primarily to the commitment to the task component of cohesiveness, and not the interpersonal attraction or components of cohesiveness. Cohesion does not correlate to unit effectiveness.”³⁵

PHYSIOLOGICAL CONCERNS

The physiological differences between men and women are also a major concern in the debate regarding the integration of women into combat arms. By and large, women are weaker, with less upper body strength than a man and have less aerobic capacity. Strength and endurance are clearly key components of one's success in a direct combat specialty due to the strenuous nature of the work and extended duration of missions. Among those countries that have integrated women into combat arms units the percentage of women who meet the physical requirements to serve in these units is low. In Canada women comprise just two percent of combat arms positions and although women are permitted by law into Canadian Special Forces (Task Force 2), no women have yet joined.³⁶

The United States Marine Corps has recently opened its Infantry Officer Course (IOC) to women. The September 2012, IOC had two female volunteers, both of whom were unsuccessful in completing the course. One woman failed to meet the initial physical standard and the other is said to have incurred an injury preventing her from completing the course. This outcome, albeit from a very small sample population, illustrates one effect of integrating women into combat units. Women are shown to be twice as likely to suffer from injury in a gender neutral environment than when there are gender specific physical requirements.³⁷

Another physiological difference between men and women is a woman's ability to bear children. Integration of women into combat units risks damaged unit cohesion and lowered combat effectiveness through attrition caused by pregnancies before or during a deployment. This is an issue currently faced by gender integrated units. Opponents of gender integration of combat arms units cite this as a major issue. While service members in all occupational specialties are important, the level of teamwork, implicit communication, and trust within direct

combat units cannot be found in other support organizations. As such, opponents will argue that losing a female member of an infantry squad due to pregnancy is more difficult to overcome than when a leader must replace a pregnant supply clerk, vehicle maintainer, or communicator.

PROTECTING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Some would argue that at times the reason a nation goes to war is to protect and defend women and children. For moral reasons women should not serve in direct combat.

“Deliberately putting women in harm’s way is not right and women are not as physically strong and they do have impact on men around them. In a civilized society men are raised to protect women.”³⁸

In ground combat there is a high probability of being captured by the enemy. Women have a greater likelihood of being raped. In the 1992 Report to the President “The commission heard testimony from the DoD representatives and POWs who indicated that the mistreatment of women taken as POWs could have a negative impact on male captives.”³⁹ Protecting women and children and considering the additional risks women may be susceptible to if they should become a POW is something that must be considered when debating the placement of women into combat MOSs.

To take the argument of protecting women even further, one may argue that having women integrating into combat units could distract from the overall mission and that men will be concerned with a woman’s well-being over the objective. This argument has been disproven through examples. “Men do not try to protect women in wartime to the detriment of the mission any more than they ruin missions while protecting male comrades.”⁴⁰ To illustrate this fact one may look to Vietnam where during the Tet Offensive “women were pushed out of the way or left behind as men scrambled for cover.”⁴¹

In Afghanistan, from December 2010 through May 2011 Lieutenant Colonel Farrell Sullivan, Commanding Officer of Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 3/8, had Female Engagement Teams (FET) attached with his infantry battalion for weeks at a time. These women lived and patrolled with his Marines. When a patrol took fire the reaction from his battalion was to do what Marines are trained to do; locate, close with, and destroy the enemy. His Marines did not try and protect the women. Furthermore, LtCol Sullivan goes on to say, “There was no chivalry. They looked at each other like Marines.”⁴² His experience with the FET was a positive one, “they got the battalion into some compounds where normally we couldn’t go.” He said the FET was a group of motivated women and he never had a problem with anything inappropriate.

MANPOWER AND FUNDING PERSPECTIVE

Currently over 14 percent of the United States military are females. This percentage of the force can be predicted to grow based on an all-time high level of 20 percent of recruits being female.⁴³ “The Armed Forces Integration Act of 1948 gave women a permanent place in the military services by authorizing women in the regular Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.”⁴⁴ Women may serve in any position for which they are qualified, “except that women shall be excluded from assignment to units below the brigade level whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground.”⁴⁵ Until recently this rule excluded women from serving in artillery, armor, low altitude air defense, and infantry units. In 2012, 371 Marine Corps billets and 60 Navy billets were opened to women.⁴⁶ These assignments include combat support jobs in previously closed units with the exception of battalion-size infantry commands.

These billet openings have sparked a counter-argument among some women in the military who oppose the integration of women into combat units. That just because a few women want to serve in combat units and, potentially climb to the highest ranks, does not mean all women want to serve in combat.⁴⁷ The next IOC began in January and as of December there were no female volunteers. This leads one to question the level of desire there is amongst female service members to serve in direct combat specialties. Studies and research throughout several countries indicate that a very small percentage, around two percent, of women possess the physical strength and endurance to meet a gender neutral standard in combat units. This fact combined with the increased chance of those women getting injured and the general lack of desire demonstrated by women to serve in combat arms specialties must prompt thoughtful discussion as to whether or not it is in the best interest of the military, and the nation as a whole, to change existing policy for such a small percentage of the population.

By integrating women into combat arms there is the possibility that legal precedence will be set that would require women to register for selective service.

“In 1981, the Supreme Court upheld the male-only registration provision of the Military Selective Service Act, 50 U.S.C. App. 453 against a due process equal protection challenge from men who claimed that it was discriminatory because it required men, but not women, to register for the draft. The Court's opinion rested on the following argument: the purpose behind the registration requirement is to create a pool of individuals to be called up in the event of a draft; a draft is used to obtain combat troops; women are prevented, through law and policy, from serving in combat positions in any of the four Services; therefore, men and women are dissimilarly situated in regard to the registration requirement and it is permissible to treat them differently.”⁴⁸

If women are allowed to serve in combat units this issue is at risk of resurfacing. No matter what the outcome of any future selective service decision women will continue to contribute to the national cause as they have through repeated national emergencies.

Another manpower issue that arises with this integration is the cost of gender neutralizing the work spaces. Many all-male units have one locker room with a restroom attached. Configurations will eventually need to be made to support female military personnel unless the military moves to gender neutral hygiene environments.

III. EXAMINING OTHER COUNTRIES

Upon examination of other countries one finds several 20th and 21st century examples of women being integrated into all branches of the military. During World War II, Soviet women were integrated into combat arms units to include the infantry. These women received infantry training and it was said they “performed well”. Examples of success stories include a female sniper taking out a German company within a 25 day timespan and another who killed 300 German soldiers.⁴⁹ In addition to the infantry, the Soviet Union were the first to allow women to fly combat missions. “Nadezhda Popova, now a great grandmother, was a pilot in the 46th Night Bombers Guards Regiment. ‘The Germans called us *Night Witches* because we never let them get any sleep’, she says.”⁵⁰ In addition to Soviet women, Allied women demonstrated that they were extremely tough. Richard Kohn elaborates on this point by explaining, “Women have fought successfully, sometimes integrated with men, as in the WWII Allied underground, where they proved just as adept at slitting throats, leading men in battle, suffering torture, and dying, as men.”⁵¹ History demonstrates that, when required, women are willing and able to step up to the challenge and do what is necessary.

A study recently conducted by the Center for Naval Analysis examined the “implication of possible changes to women in service restrictions.” This report examines four foreign militaries (Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Israel) and two physically arduous occupations

(Firefighting and Special Weapons and Tactics) to determine what can be learned about women's physical abilities and the effects of gender integration on unit (or organizational) dynamics.⁵²

Recently Australia lifted its ban on women in combat arms and began to integrate women into combat arms units. Australia has done this for a number of reasons. Manpower is one of their foremost concerns prompted by recruitment which has been low in recent years. Additionally, this integration moves Australia towards greater gender equality. To ensure troops are appropriately placed in a job compatible with the individual's capabilities the "Australian Defence Force will rely on gender-neutral Physical Employment Standards (PESs) to determine who is eligible to serve in each of its trades, to include combat arms."⁵³ To prove Australia's commitment to gender equality the Minister of Defence announced Australian forces will permit gender neutral berthing areas. This prevents berthing from interfering with Australia's push towards gender equality and allows women to serve on submarines even if they lack designated female berthing areas.

The United Kingdom continues to uphold its ban on women in combat occupational specialties. Through research they have found about one percent of women were physically capable of meeting ground combat requirements. One of their concerns with integration is unit cohesion. Despite this they do permit women to serve in support specialties at combat units of battalion size and smaller.⁵⁴

Canada has had a gender neutral military for more than 20 years. In 1989, Canada removed its combat exclusion "as a result of a human rights court ruling".⁵⁵ For the Canadian policymakers, allowing women to serve in combat units, to include Special Forces, was directly

related to the principle of providing equal rights for its citizens. Women have successfully served in and led combat units in Afghanistan. But this successful integration took time, “in the early years of gender-integrated combat units, recruiting and attrition were both problematic. According to a 1997 study, some reasons for this were women’s lower physical strength/endurance, negative attitudes of instructors toward women, and social and psychological barriers.”⁵⁶

In Israel women are allowed to serve in combat arms units on a voluntary basis. “Despite the policy allowing such service, evidence suggests that women in combat units are sometimes removed based on the objections of religious male soldiers in the unit or if the unit is deployed.”⁵⁷ Fear of capture was Israeli Defense Force (IDF) principle concern for excluding women for combat occupations initially. “It was fair and equitable, it was argued, to demand from women equal sacrifice and risk; but the risk for women prisoners of rape and sexual molestation was infinitely greater than the same risk for men.”⁵⁸

What the IDF has discovered is that women bring a lot to the table. Through research they have discovered women surpass men in these areas: discipline and motivation, maintaining alertness, shooting, managing tasks and organization, and displaying knowledge and professionalism in the use of weapons.⁵⁹ Furthermore, one of the key principles when integrating women into combat specialties and units is the commanding officer’s support. According to the Center for Naval Analysis report, “If the commanders believe that women can be successful soldiers and are just as capable as men, the unit may be more accepting of its female soldiers.”⁶⁰

IV. MALE DOMINATED CAREER FIELDS

Policymakers can turn to other male dominated career fields to see if lessons learned and guidance can be gleaned as to how to integrate women into combat units. A 2009 Jobs Rated Report at careercast.com found that firefighters, roustabouts, civilian sailors, and police officers have some of the most physically demanding jobs.⁶¹ More detailed examination of firefighters from 2004 through 2009 shows that women comprise a small four percentage of the work force.⁶²

One lesson that can be learned from the firefighting field is to ensure that the physical standards used are applicable and test the required function, not brute strength. Most fire departments require an applicant to take a written and physical fitness test, along with drug test and medical exam. There is no national standard/physical fitness requirement for firefighters but currently an estimated 40% of professional fire departments use the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT). This test was created by the International Association of Fire Fighters and the International Association of Fire Chiefs and provides “the minimum standardized requirements for a firefighter.”⁶³ Fire departments face lawsuits when the fitness test does not correlate to a physical function required in firefighting. Establishing artificially high physical requirements for the sole purpose of keeping the field absent of women will not hold up to legal challenge. One must be able to tie the test requirement to a function performed in that job.

Another career field we can examine is the police department, specifically Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT). In 1969, the Los Angeles Police Department created the first SWAT and today many police forces have instituted SWAT teams within their departments. Despite LA SWAT’s 40 years history only five women have ever volunteered, and of those only

one woman ever completed training.⁶⁴ These statistics lead us to believe that women have a difficult time meeting the physical standard and lack the desire to serve in SWAT. Quite possibly and the United States military may run into a similar situation when it addresses the integration of women into combat MOSs.

An examination of the integration of women aboard submarines will shift the focus of this study back to the United States military. This transition has proven to be seamless. In a recent article written by Luis Martinez, a male submariner was interviewed and asked his opinion about the female integration. LTJG William Strobel, who had executed deployments before and after the integration of females said, "There wasn't much of a difference, it was a very smooth transition." He added, "As far as being a male on a submarine, it wasn't really much of a change at all, honestly."⁶⁵

IV. CONCLUSION

America is the land of opportunity, where people emigrate to make their dreams come true, and where all people are created equal. Because these traits are part of our national fiber and because Americans continue to grow more accepting of diversity and equal rights the United States will eventually allow women to serve in all combat arms specialties and units. Whether one supports or opposes integration, the nation's leadership will ultimately make a decision based upon the prevailing sentiment of the people. In a liberal democracy, legislative and policy change is often foreshadowed by a public dialogue. Over the past several years the United States has engaged in such a discussion over the right of homosexuals to serve openly in the military. The people voiced their overwhelming support for a change in the Don't Ask Don't Tell policy. Likewise, the majority of the United States population favors the integration of women into

combat units and combat military occupational specialties (MOS). Ultimately, it is the author's view that it is merely a matter of time before gender integration of combat units occurs. The pressing challenge for the military going forward will be to determine the most effective means by which to execute this change in policy. Ultimately, the most important factor in this integration is to ensure that standards are not lowered in order to allow women to serve in previously closed MOSs.

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